

Montana Mediation Association 393

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March 30, 2007

Representative Diane Rice, Chairperson
House Judiciary Committee
State Capital
Helena, Montana 59620:

Re: Support for **Senate Bill 393**

Dear Chairperson Rice and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Montana Mediation Association. Our Association promotes mediation and has about 70 members across the state.

Our Association supports SB 393 in its present form.

Divorcing parents often have difficulty communicating with each other about their children before the divorce litigation is started. The litigation process does nothing to improve this situation. Often parents are even less able to talk to each other about their kids when the divorce is concluded.

Senate Bill 393 addresses this problem by requiring divorcing parents to try to mediate parenting issues before they become further entangled in the litigation process. Mediation can provide divorcing parents with practice talking to each other about their kids in a new way. This is practice that the parents will not get as a part of the divorce litigation.

I believe that ongoing parental conflict is the biggest predictor of how children will adjust to their parents' divorce. Providing divorcing parents with the opportunity to improve their communication and reduce their conflict with each other will benefit the children, their parents and the courts.

Thank you.

Kerry Newcomer, President
Montana Mediation Association

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An association of professional mediators and neutrals

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